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The Commonweal

March 16, 1951

AS OTHERS SEE US

The Temper of U. S. Policy

MURRAY BALLANTYNE

THUNDER ON THE LEFT

The Little Titos

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

PRUDENCE AND THE PICKET

The Catholic as Philistine

WILLIAM P. CLANCY

Volume LIII **15c** *Number 23*

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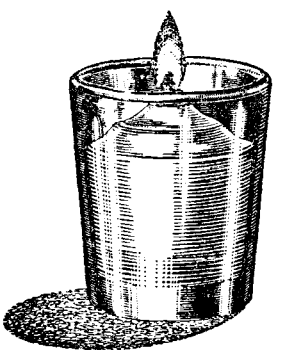

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted, 1951, in the U. S. A., by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, $7 a year; Foreign $8. Single copies, 15c.

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Stalemates

FOR some weeks now the conviction has been growing that, on the basis of forces currently committed, the Korean War has become a military stalemate. Opinion in Washington and of commanders in the field is that the firepower, planes, etc., of the UN forces counterbalance the superior Chinese manpower. There is no absolute certainty, but the likelihood that there will be no major shifts in the actual battle line raises anew the question of the fate of South Korea.

Reports of the devastation there could scarcely be more emphatic. South Korea has suffered the worst destruction ever visited upon any nation. At the same time it is crammed with millions of helpless refugees; in the big port city of Pusan, for instance, they are billeted fifteen or twenty to a room. Food, naturally, has to be doled out in wretched quantities.

In addition to the vast problem of material aid there are others which are less tangible. There is the key question for Asia of land reform. A program distributing ownership has been enacted by the Korean Assembly, but has been held up by the ebb and flow of battle and the influx of the refugees. There is above all the challenge, and the opportunity, to make South Korea the model community of the whole embattled Far East—a land where decent living standards, a democratic social and political setup and the integration of Western technical aids will demonstrate the hopes of the non-Communist world for liberated colonial peoples. This would only seem the Korean's due, since their country has been laid waste and their people killed to uphold the principle of collective security. Rehabilitation of South Korea would loom even more important if a protracted military stalemate should lead the Chinese to seek peace.

Except for the absence of this last possibility the Korean situation is much akin to the general stalemate widely believed to be reached between the ambitions of the USSR and the defense efforts of the United States and her allies. The atom scientist, Dr. Vannevar Bush, in the first broadcast of the Committee on the Present Danger, put it this way: "If Russia knows that she cannot go beyond certain boundaries without provoking a war, she will not pass those bounds: no war will occur. . . . Strategic bombing . . . gives us a military stalemate." And he goes on to say, "To maintain that stalemate is the real problem."

Dr. Bush reflects the existing nationwide confidence in our growing military strength. Again we cannot be absolutely certain. But there is enough likelihood that the cold war and continuing rearmament will keep on at their present pace to raise questions as to the other elements in our policy under such conditions. About all that has been projected so far for the next five years is a national budget in which defense expenditures will reach a peak two years from now and then level off. It would be reassuring if at the same time the American people had some evidence that prices would be kept in hand—if not rolled back—that the value of the dollar would be maintained and that there would be some approximation of equality of sacrifice.

It is not possible, of course, to separate general policy from strictly military policy either domestically or in the international field. They go together. The confidence which Washington is able to inspire in this country and among other peoples will have a lot to do with determining the real strength of the defenses of the West. Such matters as trade policies are to the point. The United States cannot afford to discriminate against nations with low bargaining power in the scramble for strategic raw materials. We cannot abandon our reciprocal trade program at the behest of American business interests. We must also do such things as to give the Point IV program a new lease on life.

The peoples of the world want to know what

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we plan to do with our new-found and prospective military strength now that things have apparently reached a stalemate. And beyond that they want to know what life will be like within the extensive area of joint defense.

Dictator's Way

FIVE years ago a political weekly, *Estrada,* was suppressed in Argentina. It was a small paper edited by ardent Christian Democrats. It was suppressed after publishing seven issues. Its circulation, if remarkable for such a venture, was comparatively small. Its suppression by ecclesiastical authorities was widely held to be for fear of the Peron Government. For *Estrada,* which concerned itself only with politics, openly criticized the newly-elected government for many things, including the suppression of two Catholic papers in the smaller cities of Junín and Parana. *Estrada's* passing was scarcely noted in this country, but from that moment the days of *La Prensa* were numbered — even though it was not, like *Estrada,* an anti-Peron paper but only an independent daily presenting the news honestly with little slant or comment.

Why has *La Prensa* lasted all this time and why has it been suppressed or taken over by the government just at this historic moment? Apparently public dissatisfaction has reached a point where President Peron fears that he may not be re-elected. Strikes of Argentine bank employees, dock hands, and especially of railroad workers indicate that Labor is no longer with him. There are serious disputes with the Church. The loyalty of the army is in some question. Therefore Peron finds not only hostile, but even independent, opinion intolerable with a new election coming up next year. The two big independent newspapers, *La Prensa* and *La Nacion,* are doomed.

There is a curious parallel between the current Pan-American Olympic Games in Buenos Aires and the 1936 Olympics in Nazi Germany. Both were conceived in striking propaganda terms. In both the host nation had to be victorious and made the outcome certain by including certain obscure athletic or semi-athletic events for which visiting teams did not have entrants. In Germany swastikas were everywhere; in Argentina all "Olympic" sports arenas have been named "President Peron" stadiums.

The difference is that Adolf Hitler was about to launch upon the world a train of misery that even now still moves ahead full steam. Peron and Evita will not be able to reach out much beyond their own restricted and remote terrain. But they have given Latin-American dictatorship a modern twist. The resentment their comparative efficiency arouses may well spread the demand for political democracy in South America.

Textbooks, Russia and Ignorance

A PROFESSOR from the education school at Syracuse University has found that the textbooks most widely used in American high schools give inadequate attention to Soviet Russia. Statistically the story is that our geography and world history texts devote respectively only 6 or 7 per cent of their material to the USSR. A typical volume carries three times as many pages on Brazil and on Australia as it does on the Soviet Union.

The man is unquestionably right. But the author who attempts to redress the balance in his next revision will have no easy time of it. Where, for instance, will he go for reliable current data on Soviet Russia? Hardly to official publications of the Kremlin. Where else, then?

What should be the point of view of an American secondary school textbook on Soviet Russia anyway? The unhappy role of French and German schoolbooks in perpetuating the enmity between those ancient European rivals must be borne in mind. Yet an American author could hardly go to the other extreme and present the USSR simply as a great social experiment.

But the main thing this suggestion does is to underline the increasing importance of mutual knowledge between the Russian and American peoples. We cannot hope to get through to the

• NEXT WEEK •

DANIEL SELIGMAN reviews *The Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald,* edited by Malcolm Cowley.

"At his best, Fitzgerald was an immensely suggestive writer, a wizard with the language, and — a point that is usually overlooked—a fine humorist. . . . Fitzgerald's real limitation was not merely a matter of circumstance. Ultimately, his problem was a personality problem that made him unable to write about anything except the failures of weaklings."

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Russian people without ourselves finding out more about them. Somehow we must get through. For even a war would not settle things unless a fundamental agreement were to be reached between our respective peoples.

Give-and-Take

IN THE rather long debate on the draft of eighteen-year-olds, no one has had occasion, naturally enough, to pay much heed to the nation's eight-year-olds. It is, of course, a pardonable omission, but in a way it is also a short-sighted one. On December 7, 1941, today's eighteen-year-olds, who were then about eight or nine, had no more place in our military thoughts than does the eight-year-old of today, but surely this short-sightedness of ours, as much as anything else, has contributed to that state of national peril which, as it always does, makes a new military draft necessary.

As a nation, we have a natural tendency to take the short view, to polish off wars when they come along and in between times to settle back in the sun, giving very little thought to the unpleasant possibility that the eight-year-old running around now may, in ten years time, be shooting his way out of a trap somewhere or racing for an A-bomb shelter. All that seems so far off in the future.

Well, if the eight-year-old of today is to reach eighteen intact, and if, when he gets there, he is to be free of a military draft, it can pretty safely be said that this happy state of affairs came about only because in 1951 his forebears settled the future of Germany without a fight. It would be nice to think, in 1961, that we had somehow or other managed to do just that and it would be very nice to think, right now in 1951, that there was some easy way to do it. But there isn't.

At the preliminary foreign ministers' meeting in Paris, Russia has again proposed the demilitarization of Germany and the withdrawal of all foreign troops. This is a proposal that the Western powers would like to be able to accept, and they would accept it, if they had reason to believe that the Russians were sincere about respecting German neutrality. But the example of Korea is not to be forgotten, nor is the Berlin blockade, nor the East German Communist army, and so it is that Russia herself has made the acceptance of her own German proposal impossible because of the aggressive pattern of her policy.

These circumstances have led the State Department some months ago to retaliate by supporting the rearmament of Western Germany within the Atlantic Treaty framework, and it is the prospect of German rearmament, so fearful to the Russians who remember well their seven million war dead at Nazi Germany's hands, that has driven them to seek a foreign ministers' meeting in the hope of forestalling the resurgence of a nearby and powerful enemy, and the buildup of the Atlantic wall of resistance against their expansion. To understand Russia's reasoning, we would have to think of Canada as being to us what Germany has been to Russia.

The State Department has been well aware of the risk we are taking in advocating German rearmament, the risk of provoking the Russians to war, even though the strictly defensive intentions of our Atlantic military preparations are quite obvious. This magazine has supported the State Department's reasoning, because we cannot see how to obtain peace except through strength, we cannot see that withdrawing now from Germany will guarantee peace any more than withdrawing from Korea did, even allowing for the differences in the two situations. And yet we believe that every care should be taken not to antagonize Russia to war.

What to do? Certainly we have no confident answer to that question and we are quite sure that no one else has either. But we would make two suggestions. First, we believe that since no quick answer to the German problem can be found this year or next, it would be wise for us to adjust our thinking accordingly, to set ourselves mentally for a long and nerve-wracking give-and-take between East and West over Germany until some agreement is cautiously and peacefully reached. Secondly, we believe that the bringing of German troops into the Atlantic defense setup should be put off to the very last, until that step absolutely must be taken to protect free institutions in Western Germany, until, that is, there is absolutely no chance to agree with the Russians on some kind of an independent Germany.

To do otherwise, to give up on negotiation, to build a fire now under Western Germany, a fire that could hardly be put out without grave risk of igniting general war, would be virtually to set our minds to the inevitability of world war. It is not altogether up to us to avoid that war but the day will come when the eight-year-olds of 1951 will have reason to look back and see how successful we were in preventing it and how hard we tried.

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Wanda, a New American

IN EUROPE, Wanda was only one of millions with a story to tell. And even over here, if an American happens to be one of those who liberated Dachau, or if he never left the States but only spent an evening once reading something like Eugen Kogon's *The Theory and Practice of Hell,* nothing Wanda can tell him will seem very sensational. There are people with a personal history like hers all over Europe—too many for one of them to get the attention Wanda got when she told her story the other evening. It wasn't an interview. It was a conversation in a living-room. Maybe for the first time in the eleven years since she was taken by the Nazis from her home in Poland, for slave labor in Germany, Wanda alone held the stage.

The long years of being dealt with as a number, as a head in the herd, are finished for her. Until a week ago, Wanda, who first learned what it was to be branded when she wore the small P (for Polish) that set her off in Hitler's Reich, was classified as a DP. Now she has found a place in America. It is still somewhat incredible to her that she is here. She is seeing America with new eyes, still marveling at things that the rest of us—as she will too, in time—properly take for granted.

Wanda is twenty-six now. She was fifteen when the letter came from Gestapo headquarters in her town. Her father was ordered to send his daughter to report for work in the Reich. The poor man didn't know what to do. There were all kinds of stories about what happened to girls who were taken. But what could a single, unimportant man without influence do? He did nothing. And for awhile it seemed he made the wise decision. Weeks passed and nothing happened. Then in the middle of the night there was a banging on the door. Wanda, a scared kid, went without resistance, almost without tears. It was the last time she saw her parents.

She was led to a public building in the center of town where a group of her classmates had been collected. The next morning they were shipped to Germany. That was the last time she walked on Polish soil. "Maybe never again," she says now.

In Germany she was assigned to labor in a textile factory. For the next six months she spent long hours sewing buttons on Nazi uniforms. Life in the factory was harsh and dreary. The hours were excessive, there was no freedom of movement and little chance for recreation ("Sometimes in the dormitory we sing, but usual we're too tired.") Worst of all, Wanda says now, she was always hungry. "All the time they say, You work! But they no give you enough so you be strong to work."

Someone passed around a rumor that if one asked for a transfer to farm labor it could be arranged. On a farm one would be assured of food. Wanda, a city girl, tried it. It worked. Until the war ended, she was assigned to the same farmer. For almost five years she lived with this German family.

The work was as hard as at the factory, the hours were even longer, but the food was comparatively plentiful. Wanda got up at three in the morning and rarely got to bed before ten or eleven at night. Sunday afternoon and evening she was free. A neighboring farmer had given permission for the young Polish laborers in the area to use his barn on Sunday evenings. There they danced, sang wildly and enjoyed themselves. "That part was fun," Wanda says. "We were all young. That man, he has good sense. He know you can't treat young guys and broads (Wanda learned her English from GI's) like they're grandmas and grandpas."

Some of the farmers who had been given slave labor were kinder than others. "My guy, he was a bastard," Wanda says simply. "All the time he's making cracks about how much I eat. Lots of times he beat the hell out of me. He used to tell me, You're going to be here all your life, you'll never get away—Wanda, you'll always have to work for me! Only one time I blow my stack. Then I say, You wait, mister, you come down in the world! He say then that he report me and then I have to go to a concentration camp. I was scared. But now I know he'd never let me go. Too much trouble to get another girl."

The farmer's wife and mother-in-law were kind. "They were afraid of the old man too, but sometimes they tell him, You let Wanda alone, she works hard for us, let her alone, she's a good girl. . . . They have three little kids, these people, but I don't have much to do with them because I work in the field all day. At night I do the housework but the kids are asleep then."

When the Americans arrived, Wanda says, she put on her coat and walked out. "Like I told him, my day finally comes." Before she left, the grandmother asked if she was going to give a bad report. "She say if I tell the Americans everything, maybe they kill him, and then the kids have no papa and there is no man on the farm. . . . So when the American captain ask me, I say, Oh, he's not so bad. I try to pay back the women that way because even at first, when Germany is winning the war, they are good to me."

After the war Wanda was classified as a DP. There was never any question of her going back to Poland. "I hear the Russians are there and I know better. Even 1945 I know better. Some of the Poles went back and then a few of them sneak back to Germany, after. They tell me I was smart to stay with the Americans."

For the past five years Wanda has been praying to come to the United States. While she waited there were DP camps, American GI's, one in particular ("You need someone should buy you clothes. All the girls had a boy-friend"), and long, bureaucratic delays.

Now that she is here, she thanks God for answering her prayers. "Pretty soon I start to go to Mass again, first time since I leave Poland. Now I pray for a husband and a new life here, with no war, no camps, no little P on my coat, no DP uniform.

To help process her coming to the States, Wanda said, she had to get a letter from the German farmer. "I go to see him and he's so-o-o nice now. He says, When you go to the States, send me coffee."

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Temper of U. S. Policy

A Canadian accepts an invitation to speak up and state things bluntly.

By MURRAY BALLANTYNE

CANADIANS, America's nearest and most sympathetic neighbors, are admirably placed to play the honest broker, to act as interpreter between the United States and Great Britain, between the United States and the world, but they are too polite to play their role effectively—that is the conclusion reached by William C. Wade of the Foreign Policy Association of New York in a recent article in the *International Journal*, quarterly organ of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs.

"Mr. Pearson," he writes of our Secretary of State for External Affairs, "—or other leaders in or out of the government—might become much less polite, stating things plainly and bluntly without qualifications. . . . Honest differences honestly stated . . . can become the subject of something louder than a whisper. Frankness between friends is both permissible and desirable, and Canadians rarely appear to exploit fully the fund of friendship they have."

If Mr. Wade is right in saying that it is the duty of Canadians to tell Americans how their foreign policy looks to sympathetic outsiders, I for one am willing to try to do the job. Perhaps, after all, it is time for plain speaking, for recent tensions in the United Nations have revealed a difference of emphasis, a divergence of policy, which almost threatened a split between the British and American peoples on whose cooperation the peace of the world depends.

Despite her final and almost inevitable victory in the UN vote on the modified resolution condemning China as an aggressor, the United States is not in emotional rapport with her allies. Even Canada, which eventually voted for the modified American resolution, thought it inexpedient and objectionable in part. We are still with you. When the ultimate decisions have to be made, we will always be with you. But we are not with you enthusiastically. We are uncertain of your calmness, your maturity, your understanding, your consistency. We fear your emotionalism, your impatience, and your failure to comprehend the psychology of others. Even we Canadians, so close to you and so like you, are profoundly uneasy because of the tone and temper with which you conduct foreign affairs. We respect you, we like you, but we are nevertheless anxious because of you.

It is not easy to write of these things. Even when asked to do so, it is not easy. And our hesitation springs not only from the consciousness of our relative smallness, from our inferiority complex, but also from our vivid realization of the nobility of the ideals that motivate you and of the generosity with which you seek to implement those ideals. It is you who bear the brunt of the fighting in Korea, you who make the greatest sacrifices, you who are in the forefront of the effort. For us to criticize while you carry most of the load might well seem invidious. If now I, for one, lift my voice to speak frankly, it is only because of the invitation, only because I hope that out of such honesty repeated on a larger scale may come a restoration of true unity and confidence between us.

★

FROM New York to Montreal is only an overnight trip on a train. You can dine in the one city and breakfast in the other. Yet travelers making the journey these days often feel as though they had gone to another continent, almost to another world. One has only to compare the newspapers of the two countries to note the immense difference in outlook. Not so long ago the editor of one of your country's leading weekly reviews wrote to me with an air of harassment of the difficulty of editing a periodical "in a nation on the brink of war." The phrase and the feeling would have been almost impossible in a Canadian context. At about the same time, our Prime Minister was saying happily that he thought the chances were about fifty to one against war. Even now, when the outlook has become so much more somber, we remain much calmer and more sanguine.

To understand this difference, it is necessary to go some way back. You Americans are very provincial in your outlook. Europe means little to you emotionally. For all your valiant dead, war in Europe means little to you personally.

MURRAY BALLANTYNE is a Canadian Catholic journalist, formerly an editor of The Ensign.

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You have not suffered directly. You came out of the last conflict immensely stronger and richer than you entered it.

It is not so with us. I speak to you not only as a Canadian citizen, a North American but also as a member of the world-wide Commonwealth. Canada, like the United States, is richer and more powerful than before the war. But the Commonwealth is not. It suffered horribly in the last war. We remember vividly and indelibly the dreadful days when word came from London that "the life of the Empire hangs by a thread," when alone Britain had to fight off a monstrous menace. And the effort cost dearly. As an Empire, we won the struggle, but it is hard to know whether the effort did not ruin the Empire.

There are many of us to whom Great Britain is still the mother-country. We winced with every bomb that fell on her in the last war. We are urgently aware of the crushing devastation that would rain down on her in another war. As France spent herself in the first war, and found herself necessarily but unenthusiastically a follower of Great Britain thereafter, so did we of the Commonwealth spend ourselves in the second and so do we now find ourselves your followers. With this difference, that we will second you enthusiastically if only you will lead wisely. My first point is not that you are ignorant of the horrors of war, that would be impertinent; but that we are still more aware of them than you and therefore still more reluctant to endure them again. It is a difference of emphasis which affects our whole judgment of the current crisis.

And then we have been through all this before. We too were once in the driver's seat. The idealism for democracy which you feel now as principals, we felt in 1914. The enthusiasm for collective security, the hatred of aggression, that you experience now, we experienced in 1935 at the time of the Abyssinian crisis. The grim determination to combat totalitarianism that you now demonstrate, we demonstrated in 1939.

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UPON you now falls the responsibility of leadership, and, like all leaders, you sometimes feel yourself unsupported. We sympathize with you. We too know that feeling. We too know the cost of leadership. But some of the expressions you have given to a natural impatience have angered us deeply. If, as a Canadian, I am to speak "Louder, Please!" then here is the point at which I must be most frank, for it is necessary that you should know how some of your actions strike others.

Voices in your midst have protested that you have been left almost alone in fighting Communist aggression. We find this charge exasperating. First of all, is the claim true? Doubtless you would have liked from us, and perhaps should have had from us, fuller and more enthusiastic help. But were you ever really alone? Have not our forces, small though they are, been fighting with you in Korea from the first moment we could get them there? Moreover have we not been fighting Communist aggression "alone" in Malaya for years; and has not our still more harassed ally—France—been fighting it in Indo China?

Nor is that all, for such a taunt against us causes us to react instinctively with the "tu quoque" of asking where you were from 1914 until 1917. Where were you at the time of the Abyssinian crisis, when from the side-lines you urged us to stand up against aggression but would not yourselves even enter the League of Nations? And where were you—I'm sorry, but I must say it since we feel it — where were you in 1939 and in the terrible year of 1940 when we were alone, desperately alone, against the whole might of triumphant Nazi Germany then allied with Soviet Russia? We know what it means to be alone.

No, you are not alone, and you will never be alone so long as we have strength to stand at your side. For we have come to know, to admire, and even to love your idealism and your generosity. Never has a people been generous as you have been generous in the past five years. We salute your generosity, and we recognize that it has not sprung solely or even mainly from principles of self-interest, but from deep wells of genuine charity.

But even in your generosity there is a danger. You must learn to take human nature as it is, and to understand that to be a recipient of another's generosity is galling for a proud people. That is what Saint Vincent de Paul meant when he said that we must give bread with love so that the poor may forgive us the insult of our gift (not with calculation, as in the proposal to cut wheat to India because of disagreement with the policy of Prime Minister Nehru).

And lastly, may I say that we are not convinced that American foreign policy shows sufficient grasp or wisdom. We know the arguments your Government advanced in favor of having the United Nations declare the Chinese Government an aggressor; and we know the arguments advanced by men such as the Editor of *Life* to the effect that no compromise is possible with Communism and that we may as well realize that we are already at war with it. We know these arguments, and we even admit their cogency as far as they go. But we say they don't go far enough. We admit their force, but we maintain that their scope is too narrow.

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Does, for example, American foreign policy allow sufficiently for the force of Asiatic nationalism: a nationalism exacerbated by generations of white exploitation and condescension; a nationalism made socially conscious by generations of "landlordism" and reactionary misrule? Nehru said at the recent Lucknow Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations that nationalism today is such a strong force in all parts of Asia that "Any other force, any other activity that seeks to function must define itself in terms of this nationalism." For better or worse the nationalism to which he referred is rampant. We can no more stem it than Canute could stop the tide. Yet what do we find? We find that it is not enough that the Dutch opposed this force in the East Indies! It is not enough that France has allied herself with a discredited figure such as Emperor Bao Dai! But now the United Nations, under US pressure, is allied with people such as Chiang Kai-Shek and Syngman Rhee and their camp followers.

We peoples of the Commonwealth know that America is not really imperialistic or reactionary. We know that she came to the aid of both Chiang and Rhee for honorable and seemingly democratic reasons. But the East does *not* know these things. Rightly or wrongly, we have all come, in Eastern eyes, to be identified with reaction and imperialism. Rightly or wrongly, we have allowed Communism in those parts to identify itself with nationalism and social progress. These are political facts, and it is perilous to ignore them.

The United Nations was surely right to accept the challenge to collective security in Korea, and the USA is immensely to be admired for the vigor with which it responded to the challenge. But in view both of the local and the world picture, our aim should surely be to localize the conflict and to end it as quickly as we can.

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THEN again it is shallow to conclude from the incompatibility between Communism and Western democracy—as do certain American publications — that war is the necessary arbitrament. First of all let it be realized that renewed war would be almost the ultimate horror. No chance to avoid it honorably should be lost. Secondly let us realize that Communism, as an ideology distinct from Russian imperialism, cannot be defeated by arms. In fact war would only serve to breed Communism still faster. There is another hope, and it is time. There is another cure, and it is truth and social justice. If we can become and remain sufficiently strong to restrain further Russian aggression, and if we can use the time thus gained to make our system more dynamic and more in accordance with social justice, we can hope that Communism—which is essentially false and unnatural — will evolve and crash. Never should we go to war so long as the smallest hope for peace remains.

And this brings me to another aspect of the problem. For our taste, there is altogether too much talk in the United States about the inevitability of war, and thence to the desirability of a preventive war; there is altogether too much talk of "frying the Gooks" and "operation killer"; there is altogether too much talk of using the atom bomb; and there is altogether too little realization of the essential unity of mankind; altogether too little realization of the horror of war; altogether too little realization that the present conflict will be won ultimately by spiritual rather than by physical means. The United States cannot just "produce" its way out of this imbroglio. Patience and understanding are needed as well as strength.

★

BUT WHERE are we, who are your friends and your allies, to look for this patience and this understanding? I wonder if you have any idea what it means to the rest of us to see America, the strongest and most powerful nation on earth, presided over by a man capable of the vulgarity and impetuosity of President Truman's letter to the critic of his daughter's singing? I wonder if you have any idea of what it means to the rest of us to see American politicians making partisan capital even out of foreign policy? I wonder if you have any idea of what it means to see paranoidal attacks launched against your Secretary of State; to see *"primaires"* like McCarthy using a meat-cleaver instead of a scalpel to dissect Communist infiltration? I wonder if you have any idea of what it means to the rest of us to see a great nation become bewitched by a sterile anti-Communism?

The members of the United Nations may be likened to a column of linked mountaineers advancing step by step across a high and perilous snow-field. The least slip, the least false step, may cause an avalanche that would sweep us all to ruin. It is necessary to go on. It is necessary to go forward, working our way to peace. But may we not ask the leader of our party to act less excitedly and less irascibly?

For a long time we, the British peoples, were the world's leading power. As such we have had to take primary responsibility in facing many a crisis and many a war. Now you, our American cousins, are the leaders. We do not grudge you your position. We are willing and determined to help you. But you in turn must accept the responsibilities and the pains of that position. The needs of the hour are calmness, stability, and unity.

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FROM ITALY

The Little Titos

TITO might well rub his hands these days out of satisfaction for what is happening inside the Italian Communist Party. The two and a half million Party members and the half million Socialist fellow travelers have been infected by Titoist microbes beyond any possibility of concealment.

The first clear symptom came when the Communist leader, Palmiro Togliatti, did not return from the USSR to celebrate the Party's thirtieth birthday in January, in spite of what had been promised earlier. When he left Italy in November it was officially for a convalescence, although his doctors, nearly all of them Communists, had declared that he was already recovered from the brain operation he had gone through in the autumn.

The next sympton came during Eisenhower's visit in January. The Communists had promised a big protest demonstration, which actually boiled down to practically nothing. At the time of Eisenhower's visit two vice-secretaries of the Party, Pietro Secchia and Luigi Longo, who act for Togliatti in his absence, left for the USSR in a hurry, leaving the Party practically without guidance, which was apparently one of the reasons for the anti-climax of the anti-Eisenhower rally.

Then, during the celebrations marking the Party's thirtieth birthday, which were soft-pedalled apparently owing to the absence of Togliatti, two Communist members of Parliament, Aldo Cucchi and Valdo Magnani, who are from Reggio Emilia, one of the reddest provinces of Italy, suddenly resigned from the Party. They did not agree with the Party line according to which it is an Italian Communist's duty not to defend his country if it is attacked by the Soviet Union. The scandal grew to enormous proportions, since the two MPs were considered to be two of the best young leaders of the inner circle and already veterans in spite of their age. The Party's attempt to describe them as traitors and spies paid by the Secretariat of State of the Vatican and by the American counter-intelligence, was clearly not enough to conceal the fact that they had tried hard to avoid the split to the very last and had decided to go ahead with it only when the pressure upon them had become intolerable. It took a concentrated wave of propaganda from Party headquarters to prevent a landslide throughout the whole province. But it did not prevent the crisis from spreading.

The two "traitors" remained stout Communists. They disagreed only with Russian intervention in the Italian Party and so they joined the smaller groups that had left the Party earlier for the same reason. Now these groups have two able leaders.

THE biggest and most representative of the dissident factions is grouped round the weekly newspaper *Politica Nuova*. They might be called Titoists, since their break with the USSR has been for the same reason as Tito's, but they do not intend to take their orders from Belgrade any more than from Moscow. They wish to be free from any foreign interference so that they can build up socialism in their own way.

But does this mean that they are a harmless brand of Communist, a sort of "tame" variety compared with the "wild" ones of the Cominform, or that they are willing to cooperate with Western Democracy and to fight for it? By no means. They are against the Atlantic Pact and "American Imperialism" quite as much as the Communists of the Cominform. But if Italy should be attacked by the USSR, should they, unlike the Cominformists, defend their country even against the Russians? I put the question to one of their leaders and he replied: We are willing to defend our country even against the Russians, but on one condition. *We are willing to defend our country only if it is a Communist Italy.* Because as things stand now, with two million people unemployed and a reactionary government in power, is Italy worth defending, from our point of view? No. As long as conditions stay as they are now, we will react with a passive resistance to any form of war production or mobilization. We will not collaborate with the Russians, but we would not lift a finger in order to defend the existing order. And we think that this attitude might be used in the meantime as a sort of blackmail against the present government to compel it to go more and more left.

★

SO MUCH for my Titoist informer. Practically, this means that even if Titoism should spread inside the Italian Communist Party to such a degree that the Party splits up into two big factions fighting each other as "traitors," the result would be, in case of a Russian attack, that the Cominformists would actually collaborate with the invaders as a fifth column, whereas the Titoists would only make passive resistance to the war effort. From the viewpoint of the countries in the Atlantic Pact, widespread Titoism in Italy would therefore not mean a great difference. One way or the other, the two varieties of Italian Communists will be heavy handicaps to any form of preparation against an attack from the Northeast.

Since the Titoists would be the first victims of a Russian occupation—and they know it—they have a tendency to be neutral-minded. They are not interested in a war waged by the capitalist world on the one hand which, according to them, is undemocratic, militaristic and doomed to death, and the USSR and its satellites on the other, who have shamelessly betrayed the Communist ideal and are becoming something like Oceania in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-four*. They hope, therefore, that in case of war their doctrine will have spread sufficiently on both sides of the iron curtain to have an influence on the war itself. It would mean passive resistance

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to the war effort even on the Russian side, particularly among the satellites, and thus it would work underground for peace and true Marxism against American-sponsored imperialistic capitalism on one side, and Russian-sponsored imperialistic Cominformism on the other.

Titoism in Italy can interfere indirectly with the concrete measures to be taken to defend the country against an attack from the Northeast. Since the Yugoslav Titoists are quite determined to defend their country against a Russian attack, Italy's northern boundaries on the Alps are becoming increasingly important. Italy's open gate to the East might be defended by the Yugoslav army on the Julian Alps. The mountain chain from the Julian Alps to Switzerland is easy to hold.

According to the experts, particularly after Eisenhower's discouraging findings in many countries of Europe, this defense line is nearly as strong as the Northern Spanish border along the Pyrenees. Behind it Northern Italy might serve as an excellent retreat and base not only for the Yugoslav army, but for the Allied garrison in Trieste, the Allied occupation forces in Austria and even as a retreat for the French Army, if the Red Army should occupy the whole of France. Its only snag, and a big one, is—the existence of the Italian Communists, whether Cominformists or Titoists.

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THAT is why attention has been concentrated on the Communists since Eisenhower left. How to cope with them? Can you eliminate more than three million Communists and fellow travelers? Certainly not, but it is possible to aim at their leaders, at the General Staff and all the officers of the Communist army. Would not the rank and file Communists, mostly miserable and ignorant, be easy to handle, particularly with increased employment within the limits of the big rearmament program, if only the leaders were eliminated?

That is what the very able Italian Minister for the Interior, Mario Scelba, has thought of as a plan of action, the details of which are top secret, but which is aimed at the Party leaders, estimated to be not more than 40,000. If these were somehow neutralized, being put eventually in camps and treated decently, roughly in the same way as Communists are quite efficiently neutralized in Turkey, wouldn't it be possible to cope with Communism without making martyrs of Communists and without provoking a civil war? Yes, is the reply of many qualified observers, Italian and foreign, who know the country well, but only if all the Italian armed forces and the police are used for the purpose and only for this purpose. The Italian government, which is against any form of military adventure, apparently has no serious objection to such a plan, which among other things seems to be the only one able to restore a minimum of confidence in the future of this country.

So far it is just a plan, but it is one of the reasons for the Titoist crisis in the Italian Communist Party, because the Communists are aware of the risk they are running, and in all probability this plan is the main reason for Togliatti's "long convalescence" in the USSR.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Eggs, Wages and Unity

ANORMAL hen's egg weighs about two ounces. In New Hampshire last week a hen laid an 8½-ounce egg and then died. In Washington, ten days earlier, the Wage Stabilization Board laid a 10 per cent wage formula and then died. Not because the egg was too big, but because it was too small.

The industry members of the board and the public members combined to put the formula through over the loud protests of the labor members. The latter then walked out, going on strike as it were against the formula, and the whole thing was thrown into the lap of Eric Johnston, Economic Stabilization Director, who has authority to approve, disapprove or amend the formula and make it law. At this writing the egg is still in his lap, getting no fresher, though all signs point to his approving it with a few minor changes in labor's favor. Whether or not he can breathe new life into the hen remains to be seen.

Labor has taken its usual beating on the editorial pages because of the walkout. When it happened the United Labor Policy Committee, representing the AFL, CIO and railroad brotherhoods, issued a statement defending its order to the labor representatives on the board to hit the street. The statement was by way of a general squawk against the whole mobilization program. The squawk was broken down into seven headings: Wages, Prices, Rent Control, Taxes, Manpower, Small Business, and Participation in Government.

★

ON WAGES labor is sore because the formula is not high enough, because it throws out cost-of-living, or escalator, increases which have been written into many contracts in the past few years, because the formula does not exempt pensions and other fringe benefits, and because the formula isn't flexible enough to provide for extra increases for workers suffering from inequities.

For example: the CIO Textile Workers have had few increases in the last three years. Their industry was sick, and suffering from Southern exposure. As a result average hourly earnings in Northern cotton mills are now $1.31, and the minimum $1.06½, with the South running about ten cents lower. In woolens and worsteds the average is $1.42 and the minimum $1.17. None of these rates comes close to being a living wage, by any standard.

It is one of the bitter ironies of war that many people profit from it. Temporarily at least the defense program has pumped new life into the textile industry. Last October the Textile Workers were given a 12c increase,

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voluntarily. Now they have called 70,000 woolen and worsted workers out on strike for more. According to the formula they would be entitled to only 1c more per hour. And so their strike is as much against the formula as it is against the textile manufacturers.

But wages are only a small part of the picture. Or rather the value of wages depends on many other factors. Such as prices, rent control and taxes. Labor maintains that price and rent controls have been shot as full of holes as a Swiss cheese. They say that taxes punish the poor too much and the rich not enough. They further resent the removal of manpower controls from the friendly offices of Maurice Tobin and the Department of Labor.

But mostly their squawk of pain was concentrated in the sentence: "So far, virtually the entire defense mobilization program has been entrusted to the hands of a few men recruited from big business who believe they have a monopoly on experience, good ideas and patriotism."

Of these "few men" Charles E. Wilson, last of General Electric, is by all odds the one least popular, and as Defense Mobilization Director, the most powerful. Johnston is better liked and it may be that he can smooth things over. Certainly labor will wind up with more voice in the top councils. But only Congress can do anything about price and rent controls, and taxes. And what this Congress is likely to do with these matters shouldn't happen to a dog.

★

LABOR is not going to win any lasting victories, with the government and economy of these United States as they are presently organized and constituted. There will continue to be "inequality of sacrifice." But what is encouraging about the whole thing, what should give the friends of labor more hope than anything that has happened in years, is the fact that in the very midst of defeat labor has won a great victory—a victory over itself.

The United Labor Policy Committee is not just another committee. It represents, for the first time on any stage, functional unity between the AFL and CIO in this country. There has been plenty of such unity on the lower, local levels. There was unity last fall between the political arms of the two organizations. But this is the first time that there has been working unity at the top level. For the past few months the United Labor Policy Committee, composed of 14 representatives of the AFL, CIO and railroad brotherhoods, has had its own offices, its own rules and regulations, its own budget, even its own stationery. It has met regularly and reports are that the spirit is good, and improving.

If this keeps up, we should be seeing an amalgamation of the two organizations within a year into one powerful labor federation which will speak for 14,000,000 American workers. And that will be the beginning of a new day.

More on Co-Determination

ONE of the obstacles in the way of men making intelligent decisions is the difficulty of getting accurate information. News sources in this country are nothing to shout about. Even the New York *Times,* the best of the bunch is not entirely reliable, and it could hardly be expected to be.

For example, take the matter of co-determination in the German coal and steel industries. The *Times* and all the other papers I saw gave the impression, if they did not actually state, that German labor was to be given an equal share with the stockholders in the management of these industries. I have just seen a recent issue of *U. S. News and World Report* and can state that this is not true, even though the magazine itself repeats the same untruth at the beginning of its piece when it says: "They [the German unions] are getting an equal voice with stockholders in running the Ruhr coal mines and steel mills."

Completely untrue, as the piece itself proves. It points out that under the proposed law the operating officials of each company would consist of two men selected by management and *one man,* known as a labor manager, who would be elected by a two-thirds vote of the board of directors. "The three would run the business, subject to general guidance by the board."

So much for the day-to-day management, which is clearly and firmly in the hands of the stockholders. As for the board of directors it consists of five selected by the stockholders plus five labor representatives, of whom at least two must be plant employees, plus one neutral director. How is this key man selected? If the labor and management representatives can agree on a man, the man is elected. *If not, then the industry "senate" would select three names and the stockholders would pick one as the neutral director. The labor representatives would have nothing to say about this decision.*

And how is the "senate" chosen? The senate, which has industry-wide supervision, consists of three management representatives, three labor representatives, and in case they can't agree on a seventh, one public representative selected by the president of Germany, who happens to be a conservative man.

★

THIS set-up does not give labor "an equal voice" either in day-to-day management or in the selection of the board of directors. Frankly, I am glad that it doesn't because the present arrangement seems much more workable and realistic. But it is a sad commentary on the US press when such an important subject is so badly misrepresented. And it is an even sadder commentary on *U. S. News and World Report* that, having the correct information, it repeats the same error.

JOHN C. CORT.

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The Stage

SPRINGTIME FOLLY

WE ARE inclined to think of "the theatre" as an entity, an organization, a body of talented people who are rather loosely banded together but are nevertheless members of a cohesive society which has certain requirements for admission. The truth of the matter, of course, is that the theatre actually has no social or professional shape: anybody who wants to can get into the act, provided he can find somebody else with some money who also wants to get into the act. Thus, there was nothing to prevent Joseph Schulman and William H. Lieberson from writing "Springtime Folly," not even their conspicuous lack of taste or talent. There was nothing to prevent Leon Michel from directing it, not even his inability to distinguish professional stage deportment from a locker-room romp. There was nothing to prevent Louis Kennel and Lawrence Mansfield from designing an appalling set for it, not even the Designer's Union—the one department of the theatre which does require its apprentices to show competence by passing some kind of an examination. There was nothing to keep United Producers—whoever they may be—from hiring a theatre, and there was nothing to prevent a number of very bad actors from joining Equity in order to indulge their properly pent-up dreams of glory. Unhappily, there was not even a Friend to dissuade Jack Whiting, Mabel Taliaferro, and Irene Dailey from lending their own competence to an enterprise for which the word "clambake" would constitute an excess of charity.

No doubt this is all as it should be, and the theatre would be poorer for having institutional standards which could only be arbitrary at best. But "Springtime Folly" made a magnificent case for the English licensing system, the French Academy, and every other effort to regulate theatrical activity back to and including Plato. (*Closed, and none too soon, at the Golden*)

THE KING OF FRIDAY'S MEN

ANOTHER little notion we have about the theatre is that a good play will survive a wrong production, that its virtues—if they are real enough—will assert themselves and shine through, like a good deed in a naughty world. Maxwell Anderson has long since gone on record against this comfortable critical delusion, stoutly insisting that the masterpiece was never written which could withstand the directorial ministrations of a really inspired blockhead. Mr. Anderson is of course right: given a sufficiently maniacal talent for misinterpretation, a good line can be made to sound like a bad one, a deft piece of stage business can be labored into insipidity, and a stunning situation can be made to appear as though it had been conceived by Joseph Schulman and William H. Lieberson. The critic, like the audience, is confronted with an actuality, a *fait accompli*. The text has already been translated into stage direction, the stage direction has been incorporated into an acting performance, and the performance—whether it be the result of a succession of distortions or even a succession of improvements—is no longer divisible into the separate operations which have gone into its making. Further, what is seen on the stage has the final authority of flesh and blood, of movement and repose, and the critic who is able to pry one of its constituent elements loose from another with any degree of exactitude is a rare bird indeed. Normally, he must simply assume that what passes before him bears some relation to what the author intended, and hope that in passing judgment he is doing no one an injustice.

"The King of Friday's Men" was lucky in one respect (not *very* lucky, since it closed after four performances): it contained its own handy reference guide to where the blame for its failure in performance lay. The guide was one Walter Macken, who was repeating the role he had created in the successful Abbey Theatre production of the play. Before Mr. Macken appeared, the dialogue itself sounded lifeless, the situations seemed forced, the imaginative level was disturbingly low for a play which had broken the Abbey's long-run record. In effect, the actors seemed to be struggling with indifferent materials. Whereupon Mr. Macken appeared and the dialogue suddenly became fluid and perceptive, the situations valid and even touching, and the author's imaginative capacity fresh and winning. Since there is no reason to suppose that the author, Michael J. Molloy, wrote Mr. Macken's lines himself and borrowed the rest from an old play by Irving Kaye Davis, one was free to conclude that those responsible for the American production—no directorial credit is given—had so miscast and had so thoroughly misunderstood the tone of the play as to very nearly obliterate the author's quality as well as his intention. Mr. Macken, in part, set things right, though once he had spoken the play was doubly doomed; thereafter it would be necessary to suffer the contrast between his passages and those of his fellow-players, to let ourselves be caught up for a moment when he was speaking only to be caught flat-footed whenever anyone else opened his mouth. A number of times during the evening we were exposed to a curious theatrical spectacle: Macken would finish a speech and turn expectantly to another performer, only to have the stage shrivel noticeably and the other performer turn paper-thin. Of the local recruits, Frederic Tozere alone conveyed anything of the character and dramatic vigor of the piece, indicating that in a better production he might have given plausibility and excitement to a difficult role.

"The King of Friday's Men" is certainly not a great play—the ending is not quite right, there is some ambiguity of sympathy, and there are irrelevant sequences—but it is, I think, a good one. And it is clear to me, through the services of Mr. Macken, that author Molloy is more talented than he is well-served by his present company and producer. (*Closed at the Playhouse*)

WALTER KERR.

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The Screen

THE INNOCENTS

WHETHER or not you like films imported from abroad, you've got to admit many of them are stimulating (not only to movie goers but also to American movie makers) and they frequently provide topic for discussion. Best of the newest imports is an English production which you better put on your list of things to be seen. You probably won't recognize any of the names in the cast of *"The Magnet"* but this cast excels in performances that make so many of the English movies outstanding in characterization. Actually "The Magnet" is typical of English productions in other aspects: its direction is extremely slow; its people throughout are as real as people; and its thin story has a series of O. Henry twists that startle you and make you realize how life-like all this is.

★

THE story is mainly concerned with a sensitive little boy, expertly played by William Fox, who lines up well with the youngsters in "Fallen Idol," "The Rocking Horse Winner," and "Prelude to Fame." While he is still quarantined because of a scarlet fever scare, he meets a smaller boy who has a magnet. Our Johnny is fascinated by the magnet for which he trades his "invisible watch" and then runs like everything—with the smaller boy's nurse shouting "stop thief" in hot pursuit. Johnny gives away his ill-gotten prize to an Iron Lung Appeal Fund; and then later he is smothered in guilt—not only for being a thief, but also because he thinks he's responsible for the smaller boy's death. Through Charles Frend's excellent direction you suffer all the way with this boy, whose vivid imagination leads him on a series of adventures in a half-real, half-fantastic world. But what makes this film so extraordinary is its effective contrasting of the adult mind, with *its* half-real, half-fantastic attitude, and the mind of a youngster. The man, collecting funds for the iron lung, tells and retells his version of how an appealing boy offered a magnet as his contribution—until the story is sentimentalized all out of shape. And the boy's father, a psychiatrist, gives his scientific explanation of the boy's peculiar behavior—an explanation that is as far from being sound as the boy's own misunderstanding of his supposed wickedness.

"The Magnet" is really a comedy, and while it has plenty of satire, it has none of the bitterness of those other fine movies about children like "Fallen Idol," "The Window" or "The Bicycle Thief." You know at the end that this youngster is not going to be scarred permanently by his frightening experiences; and you also know at the end, when the story has swung its full cycle, that Johnny, though wiser, is still an innocent who will one day be as mature as his elders and as fantastic-minded as his psychiatrist father and the imaginative fund collector.

A FRENCH import doesn't treat its young innocents so well. *"The Lovers of Verona,"* with English subtitles by Herman G. Weinberg, is a kind of retelling of the Romeo and Juliet story—or more correctly a variation on the old theme. It shows a film company in Venice and Verona filming "Romeo and Juliet" and the stand-ins for the stars are a boy and girl in their teens who fall in love and end as tragically as do their counterparts in the old play. Some of Andre Cayatte's direction of this moving story is exceptionally beautiful and has a poetic quality that is quite lovely against the handsome settings of Venice and Verona where much of the movie was made. But contrasting with the lyrical tone of the young and doomed lovers is the sordid background of the girl's family. Steeped in decadence, this Italian family, who were once fascists, are well summed up when they are told off with: "Rottenness is the motto of the House of Maglia." The father has arranged for his innocent young daughter to marry a vicious gangster type of individual who holds a whip over the family. In directing Jacques Prevert's script, Director Cayatte shows us example after example of the Magia family's depravity; perhaps one or two episodes of this base immorality would have well put over the point, but after a series of incidents we begin to wonder how our modern Juliet retained her innocence; and in the scene that is meant to be the counterpart of Shakespeare's famous balcony scene, we realize that we were fooled by her seemingly lofty air of virtue.

Several of the performances in "The Lovers of Verona" are first-rate: Anouk Aimee as the young girl, Serge Reggiani as the young Venetian, a glass-blower who falls in love with her, Louis Salou as her father; and several of the supporting players contribute realistic portraits in this study of decay. But the unwholesome effect of the picture leaves you wanting to hurry home and reread the Shakespeare version. I don't think that is what these French film makers had in mind.

★

EXACTLY what the makers of *"Lady Paname"* had in mind, I'm not too sure—perhaps they hoped to give out with a French version of a Hollywood musical. The story, set in a picturesque Parisian Tin Pan Alley of some 25 years ago, follows the fortunes of a young singer (Suzy Delair) and her rise in the music-hall world. Director-writer Henri Jeanson has handled his characters and plot as sort of a stylized exposé of the Jazz Age. And the result, while amusing at times, is so ribald that one wonders if the intention was to shock more than entertain. American audiences who do not understand French may feel a little cheated, because it is obvious that the English subtitles do not come through with accuracy. But then again, since both the sound track and the visuals go out of their way to be risqué, these American audiences may be saved a few blushes by the censored titles. They could be saved more blushes by not attending the movie at all.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Catholic as Philistine

By WILLIAM P. CLANCY

THE now celebrated crusade to suppress Rossellini's film, *The Miracle,* has followed closely upon two similar campaigns: the efforts to censor and suppress the Rutgers undergraduate magazine, *Antho,* for publishing a short story which certain elements in the local Catholic community considered "immoral" and "blasphemous," and the successful attempt to remove certain Charlie Chaplin comedies from movie and television screens in New Jersey because the Catholic War Veterans "suspected Chaplin of having Leftist sympathies." These three efforts have been attended by wide publicity, and the latest one, the battle over *The Miracle,* has been marked by particular bitterness on both sides.

The pattern of these campaigns has shocked thousands of non-Catholic Americans, and this shock is shared by many loyal Catholics. Our shock, however, is a deeper one than any that can be felt by our non-Catholic neighbors, for we have more at stake; we are profoundly disturbed to see certain of our co-religionists embarked upon crusades which we feel can result only in great harm to the cause of religion, of art, and of intelligence. These appeals to mass hysteria, these highly arbitrary invocations of a police censorship must ultimately result, we feel, in great harm to the cause of religion as well as art. They are, we feel, a most deplorable violation of the human spirit, a violation which will justly expose us to the enmity of many men of goodwill, and furnish ammunition to the enemies of the Church.

★

THESE three cases of *Antho,* the Charlie Chaplin films, and *The Miracle* have much in common; they form a pattern. They involve a question of art, of the right of the artist to the free choice and treatment of his materials, and the extent to which his freedom of choice and treatment can or should be limited by prudence. They also involve the attempt to limit this freedom by appeals to mass emotion, and by consequent mass pressure. The end result, in each case, has been a semi-ecclesiastical McCarthyism, accompanied by some of the odious methods which this now implies: its "guilt by association," its appeal to prejudice and non-intelligence, its hysteria. This has made the matter of art and prudence a question for debate in the marketplace, and it has called into the debate thousands of well-meaning but misguided voices

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that appear to know little of the profound meaning of that which they so noisily argue about. It is a spectacle which many of us, as Catholics, can view only with shame and repulsion, for we know that neither art nor prudence, religion nor country, intelligence nor morality can be served by such means.

Such discussion has already been raised by the attempts to suppress *The Miracle*. The critics have been almost unanimous in judging the film to be superbly acted and honestly executed. Some have questioned its dramatic validity; others, like the critic who reviewed the film in THE COMMONWEAL, have questioned the taste of the director in his choice of theme. No serious or responsible critic, as far as I know, however, has questioned the sincerity or honesty of Rossellini's intention in making the film, an intention abundantly moral, as Rossellini made clear in a cable to Cardinal Spellman: "In *The Miracle*," Rossellini said, "men are still without pity because they have not gone back to God. But God is already present in the faith, however confused, of the poor persecuted woman. . . . 'The Miracle' occurs when, with the birth of the child, the poor demented woman regains sanity in her maternal love." As in his previous film, Rossellini said, he had here endeavored to show how the absence of charity made way for immense sorrow. A group of Catholics, headed by Mr. Otto L. Spaeth, president of the American Federation of Arts, gave *The Miracle* unanimous approval as a deeply moving, profoundly religious film. The only "blasphemy" in the film, they agreed, was "the blasphemy of the villagers, who stopped at nothing, not even the mock singing of the hymn to the Virgin, in their brutal badgering of the tragic woman." It would seem, then, that the film is not *obviously* blasphemous or obscene, either in its intention or execution. The wisdom, then, of attempts at suppressing this or other serious films through the medium of mass pressure is, at best, highly doubtful, and it is made more questionable if we recall some specific principles.

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FIRST of all, there is clearly no such thing as a theme which is denied to the artist because it is immoral *in itself*. Its ultimate morality or immorality will depend upon its treatment at the hands of the artist. Admittedly some themes, of their very nature, require moral sensitivity and insight of the artist if he is to handle them without himself being contaminated. As Maritain has said: "To write Proust's work as it asked to be written would require the inner light of a St. Augustine." Such a theme, admittedly, is that of *The Miracle*. Perhaps, in our present society, the artist is ill-advised to attempt the treatment of such a theme under any circumstances, no matter how pure his intention. But categorically to deny him his right to treat a theme, on the ground that it is *per se* "immoral," "blasphemous," or "dangerous" is to impose an intolerable limitation upon the freedom so absolutely necessary if art is to exist at all. Worse still, such a confusion of a theme with its treatment is plainly "bad philosophy," and "bad philosophy" can never, in any mature view, add up to good morality.

Second: Many Catholics *would,* undoubtedly, find such a theme as that of *The Miracle* "offensive in itself." They would, admittedly, be incapable of any nice philosophical discrimination between the theme itself and its treatment by the artist. On the same principle, however, these are the very same people who would be shocked by the themes of *Anthony and Cleopatra* (sexual passion), *Oedipus Rex* (incest), and *Lysistrata* (denial of marital rights to their husbands by a whole nation of wives). Fortunately for art, prudence and intelligence these dramas have not been made the subject of mass morality campaigns for quite some time now, so there is as little chance of these people seeing such plays as there would be of their seeing *The Miracle,* had not this film been forcibly brought to their attention. The real danger to public morality would seem to lie, not in the cause, but in the proposed cure. Vulgarity, like bad philosophy, can never bear good fruit.

★

THIRD: Even should we accept the hypothesis that, despite Rossellini's intention (and charity surely demands that we accept his word as the artist) the film is finally blasphemous, who is competent to decide this? Surely no one has ever claimed that along with the sacramental powers conferred by Holy Orders every cleric received the intuitive insights of a competent literary and art critic. Still less can we look for such subtle judgments on the nature and intent of art to the sensitivities of veterans' organizations, or Police Commissioners, be they Catholic or not. The problem is not as simple as this. If art and the integrity of the artist mean anything at all they mean that final judgment on them must be reached quietly, prayerfully and intelligently by those who are morally, intellectually, and aesthetically qualified to speak on them. Without the combination of these sensitivities, we shall have the pure aestheticism of an Oscar Wilde, blind to the legitimate claims of prudence, on the one hand, or the arid moralism of a Puritan, blind to the equally pressing claims of art, on the other. Both extremes are intolerable. Surely the last place such judgments can be reached is in the partisan atmosphere of the picket line. It seems obvious that to fail to recognize this is to fail to recognize the reverence due the being, complexity, and integrity of truth.

Fourth: Even should a particular work of art be found morally or theologically unsound by competent judges (i.e. those who can view it as an artistic whole, who can see its intentions and form as well as its theme and method), it would still seem highly doubtful that the way to deal with this in a contemporary secular society is to attempt to suppress it by means of mass campaigns and the use of secular power. Prudence indicates that public morality may very possibly suffer more in this process, with all its attendant publicity and bitterness, than it would were the work quietly ignored. For the type of educated person, Catholic or non-Catholic, in this country who makes a habit of attending outstanding foreign films is usually quite capable of protecting

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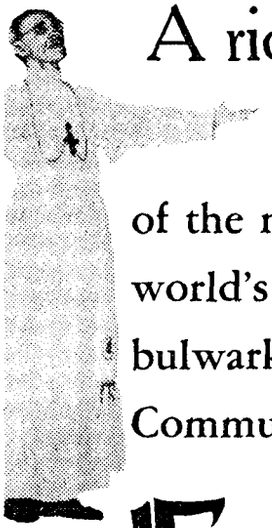
his own intellectual, spiritual, and moral integrity, of forming his own judgments. He is apt bitterly to resent attempts by organized force to make these judgments for him. And he will probably find the majority of "morality campaigns," with their hysteria and their disregard for the complexity of truth, much more subtly shocking and morally revolting than any "dangerous theme." The overwhelming bulk of the population, on the other hand, is so very unlikely to see or desire to see a film like *The Miracle* (unless, as I have said, it is made a matter of public controversy) that the danger in this direction is very small.

★

IT SEEMS that the Church, above all other institutions, since she is the very incarnation of Truth, is the one from which, even in her temporal aspects, the spectre of McCarthyism should be most conspicuously absent. For here this spectre of irresponsible disregard for complexity, this use of "labels," this conscious appeal to surface virtue, this exploitation of non-intelligence, must appear much more deplorable than on any Senate floor—*corruptio optimi pessima*. It is to the Church, as to no human society, that we should be able to look for a deep respect for art as well as for prudence. This respect must result in a reverence for art and the artist which will make any interference with that freedom slow, very slow, to come. If it must come (and there are indeed times when it must) it will be only when a truly grave threat to faith or morals exists in the community. And when it comes it will come prayerfully and quietly. Above all it will avoid arbitrary and hasty judgments on the artist; it will scrupulously avoid making art a matter for partisan debate; it will be the last to uphold, tolerate, or advocate a police censorship of the artist, a censorship which knows practically nothing of the profound nature of that on which it passes judgment, a censorship which carries within it the most serious dangers to the dignity of the human spirit and intelligence, to freedom and art. To support an overeager censorship exhibits an unconcern for the hierarchy of values; a profoundly Philistine and un-Catholic brand of arbitrary moralism.

We have the Catholic War Veterans, organized, it would seem, to bear loud witness to those aspects of popular American Catholicism which are most shocking to any mature view of the function of the Church in modern society. Is it not well past the time when a national association of Catholics, especially those who write or teach, should be formed for the purpose of publicly representing and influencing a more reasoned and mature Catholic attitude toward matters on which they could speak with some competence, matters affecting questions of art, education, and the structure of society? Is it not time we cease leaving the field open to those who, however pure and sincere their intentions, seem bent on proving that, perhaps, the Paul Blanshards of America may have something to say after all?

Has history taught us nothing?



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Books

The Grand Peregrination. Maurice Collis. Macmillan. $4.50.

THE ORIGINAL title of the sixteenth - century Portuguese book by Fernão Mendes Pinto, which *The Grand Peregrination* renders and criticizes for the current English reader, takes fourteen full lines in Mr. Collis's bibliography. Pinto's elaborate work about the Orient as he knew it was more than 300,000 words long. It required a long title, also, because it fit into no special literary category: "*The Peregrination* is not a travel book, an autobiography, a history or a romance. . . . Everything in it, to his mind, was true in a large sense; it was the most authentic and complete picture of sixteenth-century Asia that had been written, that would ever be written. But it was a picture seen by an artist, not by a chronicler. . . . His book is the greatest baroque masterpiece in the Portuguese language, and he was one of the literary geniuses of that nation."

Those were Portuguese years in Asia between 1538 and 1557, when Pinto lived and traveled and did his business of trade and piracy and war from Goa to Kyoto, and where finally he was converted to sudden missionary enterprise and more lasting reform of life, over the body of Saint Francis Xavier. This was, indeed, the brief and brilliant Portuguese period of world history, when that nation burst forth with such extraordinary energies that it is almost impossible to comprehend how so much power and activity could arise from so small a base. It can be described, as this book proves, but not really understood.

It was a time, it appears, when a limited portion of Western society had taken possession of an effective body of modern knowledge and technical ability, and undertaken new and astonishing works and experiences. But it was before Europeans had given up the powers of mind and emotion and spirit which had developed during a long, previous age; and before they became, all in all, habituated to a rationalist, experimental, and unaccented conscience and consciousness. They had the strength of two overlapping eras. It was also an interval when a natural artist, building on the late Middle Ages, could develop without the formulas soon imposed by the self-conscious classical cult of the dominating Renaissance.

Pinto's life and record were so very exotic and new to Europe that by the time his book was published —in 1614: thirty-one years after his death, and sixty to eighty years after the events he described—the author was considered a fabler, and, like Marco Polo, a great liar. In the seventeenth century everybody who read, read the *Peregrination,* so that Congreve could make a topical joke of Pinto in *Love for Love* (in 1695). They read for entertainment, not considering for a minute that what he said was true. ". . . General interest in him died down in the eighteenth century, because in the clear light of that century his book seemed too Catholic and old-fashioned. . . . This neglect continued through the greater part of the nineteenth century." Since then interest and a literature have again grown up about him.

THE THINGS which Pinto claimed to have done and to have seen were fantastic and beyond the normal scale. He was shipwrecked five times and thirteen times sold as a slave. Nearly every one of these disasters concluded an adventure that had taken him from naked poverty to the edge of enormous riches. He witnessed and participated in politics and wars on the Ocean, in Burma, in the Indies, Malaya, Siam, and Japan. He wandered through forbidden China as a convict and a slave. He visited Japan with the first Europeans to go there, and he personally introduced firearms to the feudal Daimyos of that eager nation.

In the attempt to be a plain business man, he served as soldier and mercenary and reluctant pirate, and almost as a saint, in the days when a few Portuguese were upsetting the balances of power of the whole East. He observed Buddhism with affection and respect, even after witnessing, and describing, its appalling, bloody rites of the Juggernaut. He knew the refinement and culture of ancient China, with its simultaneous unbelievable hardness and cruelty. At times, he went along with Far Eastern, and more tolerant, Mohammedans, although the final crime of accepting or condoning Islam he never committed. (For such staunchness amidst the temptations of the Eastern trade and war and piracy, what sins would not be forgiven?) He saw and gloried in the mythical wealth and splendor of Oriental potentates, and reported as well the obverse of the jeweled coin.

The picture which Mr. Collis relays to us is filled and detailed and florid to the limits of acceptance. Like a Venetian landscape painting, the canvas is hard to credit without seeing the sunset. It is a genuine mystery how men could do what they, Easterners and Westerners, did in those days. Most mysterious of all is the play in the same Christian men of the strongest faith and the most spectacularly violent crime.

It is Maurice Collis's thesis that Pinto's book involves in its external adventure, an aware and refined inner pilgrimage. Pinto criticized the conduct of Christians in the Orient, himself fully included, in terms which the English commentator considers unique for that repressive age and courageous for any circumstance. Pinto's spiritual and moral awareness grew with what he did and what he saw. And at the end of his twenty year journey in the East he met and knew Saint Francis Xavier, whose direct and original portrait is here presented.

With this meeting the adventurer's gradual maturity was at length reached, and after the death of Xavier, the mercenary gave up his most hard- and dangerously-won

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fortune and financed a missionary expedition to Japan. He himself went (his fourth visit) as humble spiritual novice of the Jesuits, but also as lay ambassador of the Viceroy of Goa. From these and continued Portuguese efforts there were great gains for the Church, but Japan was not converted, and Pinto returned to the capital in India. Then, as quickly and decently as he could, he left the Jesuits and the whole Eastern Empire of Portugal. He returned home, and, opposite Lisbon, quietly on the banks of the Tagus River, he settled and married and for twenty years wrote his book.

IT WOULD doubtless be difficult indeed to read the whole original, however translated. Mr. Collis gives confidence that he has conscientiously delivered the stuff of it to us, and its style and manner. He knows the Far East well, historically and as it is at present, displaying still the deep tremors of impact with the West. Perhaps Mr. Collis wonders too much at the faith of men like Fernão Pinto and of saints like Francis Xavier; but he gives it decent and intelligent recognition and helps right the error of schools and generations which dismissed such men, with an over-wise bias, as liars. Mr. Collis must give enough of the huge panorama, while compressing it into limits which readers today are expected to demand. The prose labors a bit with the effort, but the book is readable, and its looks and interest are increased by good illustrations, and its utility by an index. *The Peregrination* makes better reading for Far Eastern policy than most of the statements currently produced by the Government of England, which was successor to the Portuguese in most of that vast area of the still exotic Orient.

PHILIP BURNHAM.

The Atom At Work. Jacob Sacks. Ronald Press. $4.

MR. SACKS works on atomic science at Brookhaven National Laboratory, which is devoted to the peaceful uses of this frightening development. He has written a fine book which is well described by its title.

The book begins with a short account of the evidence upon which we know that there are such things as atoms. This is developed historically, beginning with Democritus, going through the work of the early 19th century chemist, John Dalton, and rapidly reaching the 20th century. A very clear account follows of what is now known of atoms, and of the various kinds of apparatus, such as the cyclotron and the betatron, for changing atoms into new atoms with astonishing properties—for producing isotopes, in fact.

'Isotope' is a word like 'cousin'; it is in the strict sense relative. Nothing is an isotope all by itself, it must be an isotope *of* something. Atoms that have the same chemical properties, but different weights and sometimes different radioactive properties, are isotopes of one another. Thus, carbon-fourteen is an isotope of the conventional carbon, which is carbon twelve. Carbon-fourteen, however, is radioactive, and has many astonishing applications. In common usage, to manufacture isotopes means to manufacture such radioactive isotopes of the ordinary elements.

The radioactive isotopes can reveal, by their radiations, their presence in extremely minute quantities, and this is the basis of much of their extraordinary usefulness in research. Dr. Sacks has fascinating chapters on the use of isotopes in chemistry, biology and medicine. He also describes industrial uses of isotopes, a highly promising field only just beginning to be properly explored. One example is the accurate control of the thickness of sheets of pliofilm.

There is a short discussion of atomic warfare, which is terrifying as such a discussion must be. "The possibility of spreading radioactive dusts over an enemy city is not something dreamed up by an imaginative writer of science fiction. It is the considered judgment of nuclear physicists that the use of radioactive isotopes in this way is well within the realm of the possible." As regards the particularly horrible possibility that generations yet unborn may be afflicted by unfavorable mutations, it is only possible to speak of the weapons that have already been used. "There is no evidence yet that more abnormal babies are being born to the survivors of the atomic bombs than anywhere else. So far as opinions are concerned, some informed persons view the situation with the deepest alarm, while others are not particularly disturbed."

The book is not mathematical, but it is written in such a way as to make the reader work. The preface concludes with: 'It is possible to close on a hopeful note: that the energy to which the nucleus of the atom can be converted may some day be used to supply the power to do a share of the world's work, thereby offering the hope of a more abundant life to the world's peoples."

ANTHONY STANDEN.

Our Spoons Came From Woolworths. Barbara Comyns. Henry Holt. $2.75.

THERE was a gag once about an aristocratic lady who came down in the world and scrubbed floors with a stiff upper lip. Many tales of poverty have that absurd air of desperate bravado, which never quite conceals a watery eye and a trembling chin. *Our Spoons Came From Woolworths* is a story of poverty, the kind of poverty where the electricity is turned off and the milkman won't deliver any more milk and the children have to be left with relatives. But there is no bathos. The heroine manages to cope with unpaid bills, an irresponsible husband, hostile relatives, and frequent babies, without histrionics and without losing her warm and ingenuous charm.

The narrative gambols along at a breathless pace. The sentences are strung conversationally together with "and's" and "but's" and "so's." But for all its one-syllabled artlessness, this turns out to be a work of artistry. The grubby details are not gilded over, but neither are they crusadingly painful. And the portrait of a naive English girl who gains insight

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without bitterness is as deft as it is delightful.

In the fleeting and intimate interlude of a train ride, a stranger will sometimes talk frankly about his life and his problems. I have heard some wonderful stories—of a girl who broke her engagement to an undertaker after he took her through his mortuary—"I was afraid he'd come home and forget to wash his hands and touch me"—of a prim-looking middle-aged Pennsylvania woman who was on her way to see Sammy's Bowery Follies with her new fiancé—"My children don't understand why I'm not satisfied to stay in the kitchen." But I have seldom enjoyed a story as much as this. Every sentence rings true, with such simplicity and understanding, that Miss Comyns is compelled to announce, "The only things that are true are the wedding and Chapters 10, 11, 12, and the poverty." I hope that the happy ending comes true, too, for Barbara Comyns is an author of sensitivity and skill.

CAROL H. WEISS.

The Greatest Bible Stories. Edited by Anne Fremantle. Stephen Daye. $3.50.

THE TITLE of this book has to my ear a somewhat Protestant ring, and of this Mrs. Fremantle must herself be conscious, as she uses the subtitle "A Catholic Anthology." This, however, it hardly is, for some of the contributors—Rimbaud and Rilke, for example—are spirits far from Catholic. As for Flaubert's "Herodias," which is offered us as among the greatest of his works, to me it seems another *Salammbô* or *Temptation of St. Anthony,* a brilliant but in the end tiresome *tour de force.* On the other hand Mrs. Fremantle proves that she has a very wide knowledge of literature. And as the anthology contains a number of things that might easily have been overlooked, it deserves commendation, if only for that. To many for whom the Bible is a little-known book, this collection of stories (confined to those dealing

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with New Testament themes) will no doubt have a strong appeal.

Yet I must confess that most of the stories as re-told seem tame and even a bit wordy. The trouble is in the use the authors make of their imaginations, their preferring to embroider rather than to cast a revealing light of special insight upon this or that incident. I prefer to take the Gospels straight, and am disturbed by what often strikes me as superfluous frills. However, if such a collection had to be made, it would be hard to think of one who could do it better than Anne Fremantle.

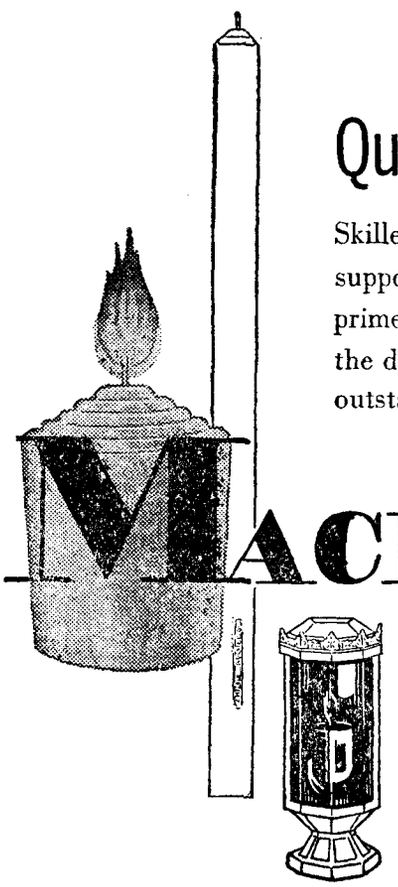
THEODORE MAYNARD.

Catholic London. Douglas Newton. London: Robert Hale Limited. (A Macmillan import) $4.

WHEN E. V. Lucas, master-essayist of city strollers, wrote of modern St. Paul's in his own London, he found the great domed edifice "too vast in its present Anglican hands for human nature's daily needs. The Roman Catholics, by their incense, their confessionals, their constant stream of worshippers, their little side chapels, their many services . . . might humanise St. Paul's." Mr. Newton's book is a series of rambles through the streets and the centuries of that same inner "City" of London, recollecting days when such services were the rule for the area he describes as "the City that once boasted more than a hundred Catholic churches," in which "there is now not one."

Newton tells of a time when the average area of a parish was three acres, when church vestry (porch) housed the volunteer fire-brigade and served for strike meetings; he tells of a statue of Sobieski altered on short notice to resemble King Charles II; of Lord Mayor Dick Whittington, Christian philanthropist (the very legend of his cat must have nine lives, for it came anew out of the rubble of a bombed church); of King James I's stricter-than-papal decrees on Lenten fasting because the fish trade was "chiefest seminary of the Navy"; of "Parson Chicken" who sold his wife to a butcher and then sought rehabilitation under Queen Mary.

He tells, too, of Venerable William Carter who went to martyrdom at Tyburn in 1584 after printing "naughtye papistical bookes," and of Venerable James Duckett, bookseller, who had been convicted of similar crime on evidence of his binder, Bullock. The last-named, convicted in turn for binding those books, rode to execution in the same cart with Duckett. On the way, the cart stopped before Duckett's house and the bookseller begged his wife to forgive Bullock. The reader encounters earlier Christian canvassers on behalf of a famous asylum whose credentials were a five-pointed red star that became known as the "Bedlam badge"; the author chronicles in a reverent paragraph the martyrdom at stake in Smithfield of forty-three Protestants when Mary was queen, and he quotes that line on London Fire (of 1666) Monument,



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viz.: "But Popish frenzy which wrought such horror, is not yet quenched," on which Alexander Pope spat in so eloquent a couplet. Mr. Newton rounds out his data on the monument in quiet that is no less eloquent as he records the obliteration, in 1855, of the sentence: "the first Jew to be elected Lord Mayor of London, Alderman Solomans . . . compelled the Common Council to erase the words."

Catholic London certainly complements such works as those of Lucas. Yet it can not escape classification as history; as such it deserves a much fuller index, more thorough documentation and a bibliography of the "threads hitherto scattered through many books, pamphlets and periodicals," as the Author's Note describes its sources.

Once Mr. Newton has garnered his material, though, he interweaves it in a way that makes the road to Tyburn teem with an eternal life and Newgate prison (scene of Gay's *Beggar's Opera*) a theme worthy of a cantata about martyrs. The problem of chronology seems not to hinder a reader's way along streets that so often end at what the author calls "the Tudor Pogrom," or at the Blitzkrieg. Catholic London has a one-ness of a different order from that of time or the Thames.

F. X. DEGNEN.

Madame de Chantal. H. J. Heagney. Kenedy. $3.50.

THOROUGHLY at home in the memoirs of Madame de Sévigné, Bussy-Rabutin and Mother de Chaugy, all of whom were members of Saint Jane Frances de Chantal's family, Father Heagney has drawn on them as well as on the correspondence in the annals of the Visitation and the writings of Saint Francis de Sales for this charmingly simple and urbane narrative. Perhaps only those familiar with Victor Biraud's delightful life of Jane Frances, and Hamon's definitive biography of her great friend and director, will realize how he has captured, in the imaginary conversations, the romance of the saint's marriage to the noble Burgundian Christophe de Chantal, the sorrows and problems of her widowhood when she managed the estates destined for her four children, and the common sense and spiritual valor of her association with the gentle Bishop of Geneva.

One might wish for a fuller account of those first days at the Maison de la Galérie in Annecy, but there is enough here to give a hint of the early spirit of the Visitation Order, which was founded by Saint Francis de Sales and Saint Jane Frances de Chantal for women unfitted for the more austere orders.

D. H. MOSELEY.

The Islanders. Joseph Auslander and Audrey Wurdemann. Longmans. $3.

I AM SURE that *The Islanders* was seriously intended, but it gently suffocates in banks of adjectives long before the story is over and all the drama and irony recorded. The authors are writing with admiration about the people of Grecian descent who have created the Florida sponge industry and built such towns as Turtle Run, while keeping the manners and principles of nineteenth-century Greece. The old generation has its fine but tradition-bound parents, those who have made of their lives what they want their children to inherit and repeat. The young generation has its weak members who are broken between the Greek and American traditions, and in addition, the young generation has its strong members and its lovers who conquer their problems. All of this is just as it is in what is called real life.

WILLIAM PFAFF.

Neither Five Nor Three. Helen MacInnes. Harcourt, Brace. $3.

IF *Neither Five Nor Three* can be taken as typical, this reviewer has one criticism to make: novels about Communism are glib.

While Miss MacInnes' book is well documented, the novelist herself has not read deeply into the meaning of the documents. She seems to subscribe to the rosy picture of American civilization painted by the toothpaste ads. She seems to think that the Communists are all the bad guys and we are all the good guys.

The trouble is that *Neither Five Nor Three* was meant to be a serious novel and in spite of the fact that the hero manages to flatten the villain with one punch in a street fight, it must be taken seriously. It fosters a sort of Christopherism that probably antedates Frank Merriwell: namely, that the well-intentioned amateur can always frustrate the ill-willed professional. Here, if he runs into difficulties, he can always call in that *deus ex machina* of all thriller novels, the FBI.

The trouble is that this is not so. Communism is a professional revolution run by professional revolutionaries. There will be no serious danger of their ultimate defeat, until they are met by revolutionaries just as professional, just as organized, but whose insight into the fundamental sickness of our civilization runs far deeper than the Communist Party's.

EDMUND NAUGHTON.

• REVIEWERS •

ANTHONY STANDEN, a research chemist, is the author of *Science Is a Sacred Cow.*

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A Point of View I

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CHARLES MALIK in The Commonweal, June 2, 1950.

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